

**Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy
to the Virginia Board of Education**

James Monroe Building, 20th Floor Conference Room
November 1, 2006
10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Members Present

Dr. Gary Jones (Chairperson)
Mr. Jerry Browder (for Dr. Yvonne Brandon))
Dr. Cynthia Cooper
Dr. Mark Emblidge
Ms. Barbara Gibson
Mr. Scott Leath
Dr. Bonnie Moore
Ms. Betty Mullins
Delegate Ken Plum
Dr. David Red
Ms. Susan Utt
Ms. Jackie Venable

OAEL Staff Present

Ms. Elizabeth Hawa
Mr. Shannon Beasley
Dr. Mike Nusbaum
Mr. Randy Stamper
Ms. Cynthia Finley
Ms. Gloria Murphy

Guests

Dr. Troilen Seward (Lobbyist,
Virginia Association of Adult
and Continuing Education)
Ms. Meg Sander (Doctoral
student from University of
Richmond, observing for class
credit)

Not Present

Dr. Yvonne Brandon
Mr. Steve Clementi
Senator Emmett Hanger

Advisory Committee History and Governor's Focus

After introductions, Dr. Mark Emblidge, president, Virginia Board of Education, provided an overview of the history of the Advisory Committee, and posed a few issues for them to consider:

- What is the ideal location of the Office of Adult Education and Literacy? Should it remain in the Department of Education?
- The Board of Education needs to determine the direction of adult education in the next few years.
- Governor Kaine has made it clear that the 2008 General Assembly session will be his education session. He has had several briefings on the Race to GED initiative and understands the relationship between adult education and workforce development. The Governor will be developing his education package next summer, and the Advisory Committee needs to make recommendations to inform that package.

Presentation by the Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) Staff: Funding, Structure, and Services

Ms. Elizabeth Hawa, director of the OAEL, introduced staff members present at the meeting and began a presentation by the OAEL staff with an overview of funding, structure, and services (see attached PowerPoint presentation).

The presentation continued with Mr. Shannon Beasley explaining data from the past three years, Dr. Mike Nusbaum giving an update related to the General Educational Development (GED) testing program and the Individualized Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) programs, and Mr. Randy Stamper presenting a brief history of the development of the GED and English as a Second Language (ESOL) content standards.

Future Goals

Dr. Jones suggested that Advisory Committee members briefly discuss what the Committee's future goals should be. Topics offered included:

- Funding
- Accountability
- Economic Development (how it is linked to ESOL, GED, and ISAEP)
- Intergenerational Illiteracy

Recommendation to Form Subcommittees

Dr. Jones suggested that the Advisory Committee form subcommittees to research various facets of adult education identified earlier in the meeting and to establish clear goals for future recommendations.

Goals identified were:

- Increasing state funding based on targeted opportunities of program development
- Eliminating obstacles faced by young people desiring access to GED, ISAEP, and ESOL programs
- Ensuring that measurable outcomes are used for both federal- and state-funded programs
- Providing evidence of the impact adult education and literacy programs have on improving economic development in Virginia

Subcommittees Created

- ESOL: Dr. David Red (chairperson) and Mr. Scott Leath
- GED: Dr. Bonnie Moore (chairperson), Ms. Jackie Venable, and Ms. Susan Utt
- Early Childhood: Ms. Barbara Gibson (chairperson), Delegate Ken Plum, and Ms. Betty Mullins
- ISAEP: Dr. Cynthia Cooper (chairperson)

The remaining Advisory Committee members will be assigned to subcommittees.

Dr. Jones requested that a comparison of adult education funding levels in neighboring states be compiled.

A time line was developed for the subcommittees' work. Members will target February 2007, to reconvene and report their findings and recommendations. After this, the Advisory Committee will approve its recommendations for submission to the Board of Education by May 2007.

Dr. Jones referred Advisory Committee members to the recent report by the National Association of State Boards of Education, *Reading at Risk: The State Response to the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy* (see attached report). He quoted statistics from page 12 of the report concerning literacy rates and the effects on those who are low literate:

- High school dropouts are four times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed and 3.5 times more likely to be arrested in their lifetime.
- One-third of all juvenile offenders read below the 4th-grade level and two-thirds of prison inmates are high school dropouts.
- Only about 32 percent of high school graduates are adequately prepared for college, and of those who matriculate, more than half must take remedial courses.
- Seventy percent of unemployed Americans, aged 25 to 64, read at the two lowest literacy levels. These adults cannot read a bus schedule or write a letter explaining an error on a credit card bill.

The report can be found at http://www.nasbe.org/recent_pubs/reading_at_risk.htm

Dr. Jones suggested a broad discussion to identify the major issues in each subcommittee area as follows:

ESOL Subcommittee Issues (Dr. David Red)

- Access to services
- Teacher availability
- Growth of population needing services
- Lack of dedicated ESOL classes
- Electronic access

- Childcare and transportation
- Two distinct ESOL learner profiles: those who are illiterate in their own language and those who are highly educated but do not grasp English

Early Childhood Subcommittee Issues (Ms. Barbara Gibson)

- Correlation between educational levels of parents and children
- Compiling strong data
- English-language-rich environments

ISAEP Subcommittee Issues (Dr. Cynthia Cooper)

- Eligibility and 16- to 18-year-olds who do not qualify
- Data reporting
- Funding
- Obstacles to access
- Obstacles to completion
- Profile of the typical ISAEP student
- Effect of ISAEP on dropout rates
- NCLB reporting requirements related to ISAEP

GED Subcommittee Issues (Dr. Bonnie Moore)

- Access
- Stigma related to dropping out
- Native-born learners in need of ESOL instruction prior to GED preparation instruction
- Retention
- Disparity in pass rates among ethnicities

Delegate Plum stressed that members need to explore how adult education can contribute to solutions to other problems that will be vying for funding. He also suggested encouraging a policy-based guarantee that by some date to be determined, all Virginians who want to complete high school (through GED, ISAEP, etc.) will be offered the opportunity to do so.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.